



Restoration by Vontar

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Summary: Will's back. El's gone. Everyone's left picking up the pieces of what was once their lives in Hawkins, hoping for a return to normalcy and peace. If only this Pandora's box could be closed...
Hiatus or One-shot.

Restoration

A/N: Hey guys! I've been thinking of a new idea for a fic, so here it is! Leave a review if you wish :)

Dustin felt like his close, tight-knit group of friends – almost like a band of brothers – was falling apart.

For one, Mike was obviously distracted. They all knew why. Out of the all of them, Will was absent, Lucas was most adversarial for a good portion of the time, and Dustin himself was merely a friend. Mike had been the closest to Eleven, and when she disappeared, Mike was the one to feel the most pain from it. For the past month after her disappearance and the defeat of the Demogorgon, Mike had been cutting class, skipping homework, and looking in the woods, hoping for a sign of El. Often times, one or all of the group would accompany him, but to date, they had found nothing.

Will, on the other hand, seemed strangely... *absent*. He had always looked a bit frail, sickly even, but his health, ever since returning from the Upside Down, was precarious, and he often spent at least a day per two weeks recovering his health and strength. As such, he was gone more than he used to be, and that meant a lot when the group was already operating with one person mentally absent.

"Dustin!" Dustin snapped back to reality as Mr. Clarke's voice cut through his thoughts.

"Um, yeah?" Dustin mumbled, to the class' laughter – it had looked like he was dozing off.

"What did I just say?"

Dustin thought hard for a moment. "That protons and neutrons make up nuclei?" Mr. Clarke sighed, again, to the class' humor.

"No, I was talking about the periodic table project. Now please, next time, don't fall asleep in class." The bell rang as Mr. Clarke finished his admonishment, and the class streamed out through the door,

drowning out Mr. Clarke's announcement of upcoming due dates and grades. As the room was completely emptied, Dustin meandered past Mr. Clarke's desk before he felt his teacher's hand gently fall upon his shoulder. Turning around, he saw a concerned look on Mr. Clarke's face.

"Dustin, is everything alright? I noticed that Mike and Will have been absent a lot recently. Is everything okay with them?"

Dustin considered his response. "Well, I mean, kinda, but not rea-

"Hey Dustin, are you coming?" Lucas, who was standing in the middle of the hallway, cut off Dustin through the open doorway. Dustin glanced at Lucas before looking back at Mr. Clarke.

"Yeah, they're fine, they've just been exhausted recently, and need some rest." Mr. Clarke's worried look didn't disappear, but he nodded.

"Alright then, go ahead to class." Dustin turned towards Lucas, and walked out, lost in his thoughts again, and still troubled by the fears that plagued his friends.

Jonathan sighed as he closed the car's door. Life had been a bit of a mess for the past month or so for him. Will was back – that was great – but he wasn't the same, being a lot sicklier than he had ever been. On top of that, there was the whole thing with Nancy... Jonathan shook his head, as if that would shake away his feelings. Nancy was with Steve – that was the end of it. Regardless of how he felt, Jonathan would stay a good friend to the two of them, and wish them the best in their relationship, as a good friend would.

He snorted. How long could he keep that up?

Unlocking the front door of the Byers' house, he stepped in, flicking a switch to allow light to pour forth on the dark living room. Gently walking up to Will's door, Jonathan pressed an ear against the wooden barrier, quietly listening to the sound of Will's soft breaths as he slept. Closing his eyes, he drew a deep breath in himself, and returned to the kitchen to make some food for Will when he woke up.

He barely had just gotten his brother back from the clutches of the nether – he wasn't about to lose him now.

Mike sat in his basement, reclining the couch and toying around with the top of his Millennium Falcon toy. His backpack was slung to the side of the table that so often held the D&D board, and by all accounts, he looked like a regular, bored middle schooler. It was a cover.

Mike was distraught. A month ago, his life had been a whirlwind. His friend had gone missing, presumed dead. A strange girl had shown up, complete with telekinesis and secret government conspiracy. A monster, in all senses of the word, was after them.

Now, it was all over.

His friend was back, alive, if not unscarred. The monster, gone, defeated.

The girl...

Gone.

El was gone, and Mike was upset. He didn't think that he could develop a crush on someone that he barely knew and barely had time to get to know. But it had happened. Something about her, whether it was her beauty, her strength, her loyalty, or any of the other hundred positive things Mike could say about her, made him fall completely and utterly for her in a way no other girl had ever done in his twelve years on Earth.

And now she was gone, ripped away from the world in an act of self-sacrifice.

Everyone said she was dead, but that was one thing that Mike refused to believe. Call it denial, but he would find her again. He could feel it, a pressure, a feeling in his mind.

He would find her, and bring her home.

Hopper glared at Callahan, who, to nobody's surprise, was sitting at his desk being annoying.

"Hopper, come on man, where you going? It's only four!"

Hopper rolled his eyes before turning back towards Callahan and Powell, carefully hiding the wrapped eggos by slipping them into his pocket.

"It's none of your business, but if you gotta know, I'm running an errand. I'll be back in a bit." To bar further discussion, Hopper turned his back and strode out of the station and towards his car. Getting in, he started the engine and proceeded to head towards the one place he always did this at.

The past month had been tough on Hopper. They had found the Byers boy, yes, but to do so, he had sold his soul, and now he was on puppet strings held by who-knows.

And then there was Joyce.

God, Joyce. He wished that he hadn't given her up back in high school, but that was the past. Such a spirited, strong woman she was. And there was that tiny hope of rekindling the flame as well...

Hopper stopped his car at Mirkwood, the fictional name the boys had given a very real place. After skimming through a copy of *The Hobbit* at the library, Hopper had to admit that it was an apt name for the location. After popping a pill into his mouth, he got out of his car, pulling the wrapped eggos out of his pocket. Looking around, he strode to the little metal container he used to store all of the food he left here. Pulling aside the lid, he carefully laid the eggos inside, and re-closed it. As he stood, a chill past through, and Hopper's hand went to his gun. Around Mirkwood, one could never be too careful, especially considering the events of just one month ago. Turning around, he looked all around him, feeling the presence of someone but not seeing them.

"Hello?" a faint voice cried, muted as if through water and wood. Hopper looked around.

"Who's there?" Hopper yelled, his deep and strong voice carrying through the forest. Hopper thought about it. It couldn't be. It couldn't be the girl... What was her name?

"Eleven?" Hopper asked, quieter but still audibly. There was a pause before the reply. This time, it was stronger, clearer, and distinctly that of a young female child's voice.

"Help!"